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Message Text

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E. O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJ: QUEBEC ELECTION

1. IN ADDITION CONVERSATIONS WITH CLIFT AND RYAN (REPORTED BY MCNAMARA IN MONTREAL'S 1699 AND 1698), CG HARPER TALKED AT LENGTH YESTERDAY WITH THREE KNOWLEDGEABLE LIBERAL SUPPORTERS WHO OFFERED ESSENTIALLY SAME ELECTION PROGNOSIS: LIBERALS ABOUT SIXTY-FIVE SEATS, PQ UP TO THIRTY, OTHERS TO THIRD PARTIES, PARTICULARLY UN.

2. DALE THOMSON, FORMER SECRETARY TO ST. LAURENT AND PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT BOTH MONTREAL AND MCGILL UNIVERSITIES, DIFFERS FROM RYAN ONLY RE WEST END ANGLOPHONE RIDINGS, SOME OF WHICH HE FEELS UN WILL WIN - INCLUDING WESTMOUNT IN WHICH HE LIVES. (OTHER WESTMOUNTERS HAVE TOLD US "WE DON'T REALLY KNOW UN CANDIDATE FAIRHEAD BUT WE'RE GOING TO ELECT HIM".)

3. CLAIRE KIRKLAND-CASGRAIN (PROTECT - JUDGES ARE PROHIBITED FROM ENGAGING IN POLITICS), WHO HAS RETAINED INTEREST AND CONTACTS IN LIBERAL AND OTHER CIRCLES BUILT UP IN TWELVE YEARS AS MNA, SEVERAL AS CABINET MINISTER, EXPECTS LIBERALS GAIN VICTORY BY NARROW MARGIN, FEELS BOURASSA MAY WELL LOSE MERCIER RIDING AND LEADERSHIP - "HE IS DESPISED BY EVERYONE" - BUT THINKS ANGLOS WILL RALLY BACK TO LIBERALS IN WEST END AS PROTECTION AGAINST PQ
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VICTORY. "PQ'S COULD NOT TAKE THOSE SEATS, BUT UN VICTORY WOULD

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REDUCE NUMBER OF LIBERAL SEATS AND THUS MIGHT JEOPARDIZE MAJORITY GOVERNMENT." HER DAUGHTER, A MCGILL STUDENT WHO INTENDS VOTE LIBERAL, NOTED STRONG SUPPORT BY STUDENTS FOR PQ - "NO ONE WILL ADMIT TO BEING A LIBERAL ON CAMPUS." STUDENTS VOTE IN RIDING IN WHICH THEY ATTEND SCHOOL, IN THIS CASE ST. LOUIS.

4. EMILE COLAS, INFLUENTIAL ATTORNEY LONG ACTIVE IN LIBERAL CIRCLES, BREAKS RANKS WITH OTHERS ONLY ON ESTIMATE OF UN STRENGTH WHICH HE PUTS AT TWENTY-TWO SEATS, PREDOMINANTLY RURAL.

5. COMMENT: ALL MEDIA INDICATIONS ARE THAT UN SHOULD PICK UP SEVERAL WEST ISLAND SEATS. NEAR UNANIMITY AMONG EXPERIENCED OBSERVERS THAT VOTERS WILL NONETHELESS SWING BACK TO LIBERALS WHEN FACED WITH FINAL DECISION IN VOTING BOOTH IS PERHAPS MORE ACCURATE BUT COULD BE REFLECTION OF EITHER WISHFUL THINKING BY NON-SEPARATISTS, OR OF DIFFICULTY IN PROJECTING RESULTS WITH SO MANY CANDIDATES IN EACH RIDING.
HARPER

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